

INFORMATION FROM
FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS CD NO.

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

COUNTRY Soviet Satellites

SUBJECT: SATELLITE RADIO REACTIONS TO
VOICE OF AMERICA AND BBC

HOW PUBLISHED Satellite Radios

WHERE PUBLISHED

DATE
PUBLISHED November 1949

LANGUAGE Several

INFORMATION November 1949

DATE DIST. /9 December 1949

NO. OF PAGES

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF ESPIONAGE ACT 50 U. S. C. 31 AND 32, AS AMENDED. TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE FBIB

I N T R O D U C T I O N

During the month of November 1949, the Voice of America and the BBC were attacked by name in 21 different monitored broadcasts from Satellite radios in Eastern Europe. The Voice of America (VOA) was singled out in 15 of these broadcasts, distributed as follows: Hungarian radio--5; Polish radio--5; Czechoslovak radio--2; Bulgaria radio--2; Rumanian radio--1. Of the 6 criticisms of the BBC, 3 were broadcast by the Hungarian radio, 2 by the Czechoslovak radio, 1 by the Polish radio, and 1 by "Free Greece."

The major difference between Satellite radio treatment of VOA and BBC broadcasts is that replies to the latter are generally more or less reasoned refutations of alleged BBC errors and distortions, whereas replies to VOA broadcasts feature most of the vituperative adjectives in the Communist vocabulary. In addition, the methods and aims of the VOA broadcasts are castigated whenever the station is mentioned and have been the subject of Satellite comment unrelated to specific VOA broadcasts.

While all of the monitored comment on the VOA makes the same general charges--that it is untruthful and the mouthpiece for imperialist propaganda--there is no apparent evidence of a concerted campaign against the VOA. Rather, each country has in general replied to VOA broadcasts when these have touched on some aspect of its internal affairs. Practically all of the Satellite radio comments imply some degree of Satellite audience listening to VOA broadcasts; and one commentator over the Hungarian radio admitted in so many words that there were those who listened to the "concocted stories" of the VOA.

CLASSIFICATION

~~RESTRICTED~~

[illegible]

RESTRICTED

- 2 -

RESTRICTED

Also of interest is the fact that the Hungarian radio references to the VOA concentrated almost exclusively on the VOA's alleged stimulation of "rumor-mongering" about shortages and devaluation--resulting in a wave of panic-buying.

REPLIES TO SPECIFIC VOA BROADCASTS

The Hungarian Radio

31 October:--Budapest issued a report on the increased consumption of white bread and denied "enemy rumors" to the effect that the introduction of white bread had been a propaganda stunt timed to coincide with the youth festival. (On the same day, VOA quoted reports from Vienna to the effect that the Hungarian Government had overestimated its stocks of white flour and had started a "spontaneous" workers' movement to petition the Government to abolish white bread as "a bourgeois invention.")

4 November:--Budapest reported a wave of panic-buying of white bread and of durable goods as a result of the above VOA broadcast and of an earlier one reporting the imminent devaluation of the forint. Castigating the "lies" of the VOA and the credulity of those who believed them, the paper SZABAD NEP called for greater vigilance against rumor-mongers.

5 November:--The Hungarian Home Service reported the arrest of three devaluation rumor-mongers, but attributed the origin of the rumors to the BBC.

9 November:--The VOA was reinstated as the author of the devaluation rumors. At the same time, however, it was claimed that VOA was inept at spreading lies.

11 November:--SZABAD NEP reported the sentencing of the three rumor-mongers and, ignoring its earlier account of the mass nature of the buying hysteria, said that the number of those arrested was so low because "the tens of thousands of our workers would not fall for ... the American-made lies."

12 November:--A commentary by Antal Apro admitted that although the workers had faith in the regime and "are shouldering sacrifices," there were those who listened to "the concocted stories" of the VOA. Apro went on to relate how such persons had paid dearly for their lesson, since they had not been allowed to return to the shops the many useless articles they had bought during the buying panic.

The Polish Radio

9 November:--The spokesman for the Polish Foreign Ministry, Victor Grosz, answered questions about "the campaign being carried out in so-called Western Germany and by the VOA, with its subordinate propaganda organs in Western Europe," concerning the Rokossovsky appointment. Grosz said: "I am not going to answer questions concerning the rudeness and insolence of the Voice of America because all comment is superfluous." He laid the campaign as a whole to the fact that "the Hitlerite revanchists must be filled with panic, and their American protectors consumed with rage," since the appointment strengthened the defense of the Oder-Neisse line.

13 November:--Commentator Franciszek Oset spoke of "the impotent madness" of VOA broadcasts on the Rokossovsky appointment. Like Grosz, he thought that the Oder-Neisse question lay behind the violence of the American reaction.

19 November:--A Polish Home Service program reported that on 17 November the VOA, quoting Spanish emigre leaders, had stated that La Pasionaria had been arrested in Prague, and that on 18 November it had been forced to retract the statement when Ibarruri turned up at the Moscow Conference of Women Peace Defenders. Citing this as another instance of VOA lying, Warsaw went on to criticize the VOA's retraction which reportedly had explained that the confusion arose over Ibarruri's visit to Moscow. The speaker pointed out that the original VOA broadcast specifically stated that the arrest had taken place in Prague.

(It may be noted that there was no Polish reaction to VOA reports that Victor Grosz had been purged. Nor was the VOA blamed for the rumors of impending price increases, which were widely denied by the Polish Home Service on 31 October and 1 November.)

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

~~RESTRICTED~~

- 3 -

The Czechoslovak Radio

17 November:--The Slovak commentator Horvath derided "a number of stupid and ridiculous rumors going about the country to the effect that there will be another currency reform in the new year" and held the VOA and the BBC responsible for originating the rumors. Fortunately, he said, only a handful of people had responded to the rumors by panic-buying, since the majority of the people did not believe the rumors.*

The Bulgarian Radio

16 November:--BTA (the Bulgarian press service) reported that the Voice of America was responsible for a story to the effect that the Bulgarian National Bank had circulated abroad a number of counterfeited French Louis D'Or. BTA stated that it was authorized to deny this story as "mendacious and slanderous," adding that "among the many slanderous and fabricated reports with which VOA listeners are regaled daily this in particular is one of the most impudent and malicious. It illustrates the low level to which the management of the Voice of America has fallen."

The Rumanian Radio

23 November:--Broadcasting in Serbocroat, Bucharest noted that a 5 August VOA broadcast in Hungarian had recommended to its listeners that they tune in to the programs of a number of capitalist stations and to Radio Belgrade. This was held to be proof that Yugoslavia broadcasts the same propaganda as the capitalist stations.

GENERAL COMMENT ON THE VOICE OF AMERICA

The Polish radio carried two general attacks on the Voice of America during November. The first came on the second when Warsaw aired the Cominform journal article, "Voice Of America Goebbels."** The second Polish attack came on 21 November and consisted of a talk by Wisniewski who argued that the VOA was not free as it claimed. He cited as proof of this contention the fact that the American radio is dependent upon advertising revenue, and that the stock of the networks is held by capitalist investors, in particular by large corporations or banks. While the commentator did not specifically state that the VOA was thus dependent and controlled, the listener was left to infer that this was the case.

On 22 November, Prague carried a commentary questioning the objectivity of the VOA. And on the same day, Budapest, broadcasting in Serbocroat, said that the London conference of American diplomats from Eastern Europe had been called because of the failure of the VOA's propaganda broadcasts which "have become ridiculous to the whole of Europe so that nobody takes them seriously."

On 24 November, the Bulgarian radio quoted the Sofia paper IZGREV to the effect that "the Voice of America is the name of a radio station which draws its dark fame from its most unscrupulous distortion of the truth." The VOA was said to be the voice of American capitalists, not of the American people.

* When, on 30 November, Minister of Internal Trade Krajcir announced price reductions and an extension of the free market, he admitted that in fact there had been a wave of panic-buying as a result of rumors spread about an imminent change in the price schedules. But Krajcir did not blame either the VOA or the BBC for these rumors.

** This article was given very little play by the Satellite radios, the only other monitored broadcast reference to it having come from Budapest on 31 October. On that day, Budapest also said that its new 2-kilowatt shortwave station was stronger than the Voice of America in proportion as truth is stronger than falsehood.

~~RESTRICTED~~

- 4 -

REACTIONS TO BBC BROADCASTS

On 2 November, the Polish commentator Roszkow, criticized a BBC broadcast which had claimed a preponderance of steel production for the Western world. Asserting that the bogey of steel preponderance had been brought forward to replace the pricked bubble of Western atomic energy monopoly, Roszkow pointed out that the Soviet and Satellite steel industries were expanding while the Western steel industries were subject to labor disputes and stoppages. In any event, said Roszkow, steel preponderance would do the capitalist world little good if the workers refused to turn their steel weapons against the USSR.

On 6 November, Budapest referred to the BBC as responsible for rumors of the devaluation of the forint.

"Free Greece", on 9 November, carried a rebuttal to a broadcast by Francis Noel-Baker, in which the British Socialist MP had stressed the fact that the resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the Greek Communist Party had contained an admission of the guerrillas' defeat. "Free Greece" complained that such emphasis distorted the meaning of the resolution.

Next to be heard from was the Budapest paper SZABAD NEP which, according to the Budapest radio, pleaded guilty to the BBC charge that it was excessively friendly to the Soviet Union. Certain omissions of fact in the BBC broadcast were pointed out.

November 17 brought Slovak commentator Horvath's denial of the "ridiculous rumors" spread by the BBC and the VOA on the imminence of a Czech currency reform.

A few days later, 20 November, Budapest told Serbocroat listeners that Pijade and Djilas were competitors in the distortion of Marx-Leninism, and that Djilas had apparently won since it was his series of BORBA articles which had been selected by the BBC for broadcasts to Eastern Europe.

The last reference to the BBC came on 22 November, when the Czechoslovak radio commentator Rosien derided the broadcasts of the "old moulded inciter" Bruce Lockhart for their lack of sense. Rosien speculated as to whether the stupidity of BBC broadcasts in Czech might not be explained as deliberate sabotage carried out by sympathizers with popular democracy.

~~REDACTED~~